

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

ScholarWorks @ UTRGV

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers -
Agriculture Committee News Releases

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers

4-7-1980

Agriculture News Release - 1980-04-07

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Agriculture

E. De la Garza

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/>

[kikadelagarzaagriculturecomitteenews](#)



Part of the [Agricultural Economics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers - Agriculture Committee News Releases, UTRGV Digital Library,
The University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers at ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers - Agriculture Committee News Releases by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact justin.white@utrgv.edu, william.flores01@utrgv.edu.

news release

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

For further information: Bernard Brenner,
Press Secretary, (202) 225-2171

ADVANCE FOR RELEASE 6:30 A.M. MONDAY, APRIL 7, 1980

WASHINGTON -- Reps. Thomas Foley, D-Wash., and Kika de la Garza, D-Tex., said today they have told Agriculture Department officials they will not support coercive conservation policies.

Foley, who is Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, and de la Garza, who is Vice Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of its Subcommittee on Department Investigations, Oversight and Research, met with Department officials last week. The meeting was held to discuss public comments which the Department has been gathering from farmers -- as part of a study and review process under the 1977 Resources Conservation Act -- on the subject of possible proposals for future changes in national conservation policy.

"We have been deeply disturbed because it appears that as a result of widespread misunderstanding of the purpose of the review, some farmers have been given the impression that the Department will seriously consider asking Congress to adopt coercive policies -- programs under which farmers might be threatened with loss of federal price supports or other farm program benefits if they failed to comply with conservation rules," Foley and de la Garza said.

"We made it clear that we do not think the Department should propose such policies and we are convinced Congress would not adopt them. Certainly we need strong conservation programs to preserve our nation's productive soil, but they should be based on cooperating with and assisting landowners in their own voluntary efforts -- not on trying to blackjack people into compliance," the Agriculture Committee leaders said.

Foley and de la Garza said the Resources Conservation Act was designed to produce a wide-ranging review of soil conservation problems and needs for future consideration by Congress.

"This review could be a useful process. A careful study of how best to make sure that our soil is kept in shape to feed future generations, conducted with wide participation by the people who own and manage the land, could be helpful. But we are distressed because of indications that a serious misunderstanding of the process in some areas may have grown out of internal conflicts in the Agriculture Department," the Congressmen said.

Foley and de la Garza added:

"We are confident that the recommendations and views submitted to the Agriculture Department by thousands of interested and concerned people will be heard, and the Department has assured us this will lead to practical proposals for future conservation policies. We are confident these policies will not include coercion."

De la Garza also noted that "when the 1977 conservation Act was written, I personally insisted on and secured the inclusion of a provision specifying that no conservation practices could be used under the bill except at the request of the landowner. That remains the intent and letter of the law."

Foley said some of the misunderstandings about the RCA review arose from distorted statements issued from some offices of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, an agency of the Department of Agriculture. He said it appears that some officials in ASCS deliberately encouraged misunderstanding of the RCA process.

Foley concluded, "I have asked ASCS for assurances that such unprofessional conduct will not be repeated, and I have asked Washington officials of the agency to make sure this is clearly understood by their area directors and field offices. These assurances have been given. This matter appears to be another regrettable example of the long-standing rivalry between the ASCS and the Soil Conservation Service which erupts periodically to the embarrassment of the Agriculture Department and is a disservice to farmers."